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AUTHOR Johnson, Charles D.
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ABSTRACT

Reported relationships between individual characteristics and group performance have been weak, but Davis (1969) and Johnson (1970) found that a subject's stated preference for working alone or in a group was associated with differences in group performance. In the present study, preference for group or solo participation was examined in relation to personality measures that focus on interpersonal behavior. On the Fundamental Interpersonal Behavior Organization and Maudsley Personality Inventory Scales, individuals stating a preference for groups consistently scored in the direction of greater social responsiveness and extraversion than individuals preferring solo participation, and were more amenable to attempts by others to exercise control in social interaction. Ratings of such subjects by their co-participants in group decision-making were highly intercorrelated, the most extravert subjects being most likeable. Furthermore, subjects preferring group to individual decisions were found to be more socially responsible. Choice of a work setting in an ambiguous situation may be associated with interpersonal stances that individuals consistently wish to adopt. (Author/KS)

PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES AND PREFERENCE FOR GROUP VERSUS INDIVIDUAL WORK SITUATIONS

Charles D. Johnson

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Most terms that psychology uses to describe personality have interpersonal referents. To talk about concepts like dominance or affection implies predictions concerning the person's relations with other people.

Given this interpersonal emphasis of many personality constructs, one might expect some reasonably straightforward relationships between measures of these variables and the individual's behavior in social or group situations. Unfortunately, research aimed at demonstrating these effects has been disheartening. Reviews of the literature appearing in the Psychological Bulletin, first by Mann (1959) and later by Heslin (1964), indicate that relationships between individual characteristics and group performance are weak, and easily diluted by manipulations in the situation.

In a more positive light, Davis (1969) recently reported that a S's preference in terms of work setting had a marked effect on his performance on group tasks. What Davis did was to simply ask Ss whether they would prefer to work alone or in a group on a lab task involving problem solving. Davis found an interesting interaction between subject preference and problem type. Group members who actually wanted to work in groups were superior on problems that permitted a division of labor and social interaction. On the other hand, eureka type problems which could not be similarly decomposed were solved more efficiently by groups whose members preferred to work alone.

Johnson (1970) extended the effects of this preference variable to a group decision making task. The experiment compared individuals and groups on a Zajonc type risk-taking task. Over a series of 180 trials, Ss had to predict the occurrence of one of two lights each having differential probabilities and payoffs associated with them. Groups chose the high risk alternative with a greater frequency than individuals.

In addition an interesting effect for work preference was reported. Groups consisting of Ss who had stated a preference for groups were more risky than groups of Ss preferring solo decisions. Among Ss who participated as isolated individuals, preference for group or individual decision-making was unrelated to risk taking.

We argued that the differences between groups and individuals were attributable to a kind of equalitarianism which, given the parameters of this particular experiment, led to an overrepresentation of minorities advocating risk. More importantly, however, is that whatever process is related to greater group than individual risk, the process is stronger in groups of Ss who prefer group to individual decision-making.

When actually assigned to a group, Ss preferring groups appeared to act more integratively, they share information, Davis found that they talk to each other more. Now the question from the perspective of personality is, what personality attributes differentiate Ss selecting group and individual participation. This is essentially the converse of the typical situation. Investigators usually begin with personality measures then they make projections about the impact of the attribute on social behavior.

The present study begins with a behavioral choice variable that is known to influence social behavior, and then examines personality variables associated with it. In addition, comparisons were made between personality scale measures of a characteristic and peer ratings of the same characteristic after a period of group interaction.

Since we were dealing with a variable influencing interpersonal behavior, it seemed reasonable that we examine personality attributes pertaining to consistent interpersonal stances that people prefer in their interactions

with others. Two different approaches to personality assessment were used: First of all, Schutz's FIRO-B with its interpersonal need approach seemed particularly appropriate for explaining how an individual's preference for group or individual situations should affect his performance in a group. Schutz suggests that the three interpersonal needs of inclusion, control, and affection are sufficient to account for interpersonal events. The FIRO-B scales also include an expressed and a wanted facet of each need, yielding a total of 6 scores (expressed-control, wanted-control, etc.).

The Maudsley Personality Inventory was also used since the extroversion-introversion dimension seemed intuitively to be related to a preference for groups. In fact a preference for groups is fundamental to the definition of extroversion.

Method

The Ss were 134 male and 132 female undergraduates in a large introductory psychology course. Initially, a secretary telephoned each S within a week of his participating in the study; she explained that the experiment was on decision making, and that some people would be working on the task in groups and others would work alone. Furthermore, the E was trying, as much as possible, to put people in their preferred setting. The secretary then concluded by asking the S to indicate a preference for group or individual participation.

In the lab the Ss were required to make sequential decisions in a gambling type task (Zajonc, Wolosin, Wolosin, & Sherman, 1968). The Ss arrived at decisions in 3-person groups and were interacting for 36 minutes.

The personality scales and group member ratings were administered upon completion of the group gambling task. Group members were separated and

asked to rate each other on intelligence, influence on the group's decision, and how much they like the person. The Ss completed each of the three items by checking one of five evaluative statements, ranging from a very strong positive evaluation to a strong negative evaluation. These interpersonal ratings were conducted first, and the Maudsley and FIRO-B scales were then administered in random order.

Results and Discussion

Table 1, indicates that the group-individual preference dimension was rather consistently associated with differences on the FIRO-B scales. Earlier, it was hypothesized that the greater riskiness on the part of groups, particularly groups consisting of Ss who prefer groups, might be due to over-representation of minority viewpoints. Of particular relevance to the notion that Ss preferring groups are somewhat more responsive to opinions stated by others, is the expressed-inclusion scale. Individuals selecting group decision-making score higher on I^e, thus [illegible] that they include others in their activities.

In addition to expressing inclusion toward others, they also want others to include them in their activities and to treat them with affection. So in terms of FIRO, Ss preferring groups indicate that they enjoy interactive situations, which suggests a straightforward relationship between the pencil-and-paper FIRO scale and the group-individual preference variable. The fact that extroversion also differentiated group and individual preference Ss is a further suggestion that work preference is an indicant of social responsiveness.

The wanted-control scale showed an interesting contrast between Ss

preferring group and Ss preferring individual decision-making. As evidenced by their higher scores on the wanted-control scale, group preference Ss are apparently more amenable to attempts by others to exercise control in social interaction.

An examination of Table 2 indicates that the ratings made of each S by his coparticipants were highly intercorrelated. These intercorrelations are probably due to a halo effect as well as actual positive relationships among the three variables.

One important finding in regard to the FIRO-B scales was a tendency for Ss with scores above the median on the expressed-control dimension to be rated as having strongly influenced the decisions of the group ($t=2.13$, 264 df, $p<.05$). The influence ratings apparently reflect a behavioral manifestation of the kind of personal ascendancy that the expressed-control dimension purports to measure. Finally, high extroversion scores were associated with likeability ($r=.18$, 180 df, $p<.05$).

In conclusion, the present study suggests an alternative to the way the effects of individual differences are typically studied. Beginning with the social choice variable with its demonstrated effect on one's behavior within the group, it was possible to derive a pattern of personality characteristics that apparently influence individual behavior in the social context.

Ss preferring group to individual decisions fell at the more socially responsible end of the personality measures which suggests that a S's stated preference in the face of largely undefined decision settings may supply some basic information about his orientation toward other people.

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Table 1: Group and individual decision preferences in relation to personality

	Inclusion		Control		Affection		Extro-version*	Neuroticism
	wanted*	expressed**	wanted*	expressed	wanted	express		
GP N=138	$\bar{X}$=4.85 s=2.81	$\bar{X}$=5.78 s=1.93	$\bar{X}$=4.71 s=2.02	$\bar{X}$=3.03 s=2.42	$\bar{X}$=5.31 s=2.52	$\bar{X}$=4.03 s=2.64	$\bar{X}$=14.53 s=3.12	$\bar{X}$=10.84 s=3.03
IP N=128	$\bar{X}$=4.08 s=2.80	$\bar{X}$=4.81 s=2.13	$\bar{X}$=4.31 s=1.72	$\bar{X}$=2.85 s=2.01	$\bar{X}$=4.46 s=2.47	$\bar{X}$=3.64 s=2.65	$\bar{X}$=13.49 s=3.46	$\bar{X}$=11.11 s=3.24

(Note: Variables on which significant differences between GP and IP subjects occurred are denoted *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$).

Table 2: Intercorrelations of group member ratings

	Intelligence	Influence	Likeability
Intelligence	1.00	.47	.32
Influence	.47**	1.00	.14
Likeability	.32**	.14*	1.00

*$p < .05$ **$p < .001$

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